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# CIA Dissension Bared in Court

## *Official Describes 1967 Employee as 'Going Off Half-Cocked'*

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NEW YORK, Nov. 8—The former head of Vietnam intelligence for the Central Intelligence Agency accused Samuel Adams today of "going off half-cocked" 17 years ago when the then-CIA analyst apparently sent an unapproved cable criticizing U.S. Army estimates of enemy troop strength in Southeast Asia.

"I was irritated. The cable could perfectly well have waited . . .," George A. Carver Jr., former CIA special assistant on Vietnam affairs, said of Adams, who worked for Carver at the time.

Carver, the 13th witness for retired Army general William C. Westmoreland in his \$120 million libel action against CBS, Inc., and three co-defendants, including Adams, said the judgment in Adams' cable was not supported at the CIA and described a "stridency" in tone that he said would not have been allowed normally.

"Mr. Adams was going off half-cocked, as he was sometimes wont to do," Carver said firmly.

CBS attorney David Boies objected to the characterization of Adams, a paid consultant for the 1982 documentary at issue—"The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

U.S. District Court Judge Pierre N. Leval ordered the comment stricken from the record.

Leval told jurors to try to forget the remark and another comment by Carver that, at the CIA, Adams "had a great deal of enthusiasm and energy and imagination and was very hard-working, particularly in tackling documents and other donkey-work chores that other people might have shied away from."

Westmoreland's attorneys have made clear in questions to former intelligence officers and military men that he wants to isolate Adams, trying to make him the sole advocate of the view that, under Westmoreland, the U.S. command in Vietnam was trying to suppress higher estimates of enemy troop strength for fear of losing public support for the war.

The CBS program charged that top military officers, including Westmoreland as head of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, "cooked the books" to hide such data from President Lyndon B. Johnson, Congress, the media and the public.

After today's testimony, a CBS spokesman said the network believes that Adams was widely supported within the CIA and that even Carver sent cables that would shore up Adams' characterization of the 1967 intelligence debate between the army and the CIA.

Carver said today that a June 2, 1967, cable from Adams, an analyst in Washington, to the CIA's Saigon office was "the personal view of Mr. Adams, but it was not the institutional view."

Carver also said he reprimanded Adams for not clearing the cable properly and told Adams' immediate boss that "we should be keeping a slightly tighter rein on Mr. Adams."

In the cable, Adams said a proposed effort to drop so-called "self-defense" and "secret self-defense units" from the official order of battle was "totally unworkable." Old men, women and children normally comprised those guerrilla units.

Much as some earlier witnesses have acknowledged, Adams noted in the cable attributed to him that such home-militia troops were listed in the troop estimates.

If they were not, the intelligence community would "produce same misleading calculations which have haunted us in past," the cable said. "In our view, it is time to be as realistic in public as in private with nature of enemy force we are facing."

Adams, who joined the CIA in 1963 and resigned almost 10 years later, was long known within the intelligence community as one of the most forceful proponents of the view that intelligence reports on the enemy were skewed in Vietnam for political purposes. Like many intelligence officers, Adams has said he felt that tampering with such data made it impossible for leaders to make sound decisions.

Before leaving the CIA, Adams had sought to have Westmoreland court-martialed and investigated by Congress. In 1975, Adams wrote in Harper's magazine that the CIA agreed to lower army estimates of enemy strength in the crucial period before the Tet offensive in January 1968.

CBS producer George Crile, another co-defendant in the libel suit, was an editor of the Harper's article, which led to a congressional investigation and the CBS broadcast.

*Special correspondent John Kennedy contributed to this report.*